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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to clean up some of the muddled thinking that obscures the distinction between theory and practice in educational administration. The author also applies his argument to the issue of possible gaps between policy formulation and policy implementation. The author begins by noting that there is a common misapprehension that in areas such as Latin America there is a gap between theory and practice. It is frequently argued that there is too much talk and too little action, too much theory and not enough practice. The author maintains, however, that the gap is really a "pseudogap" caused by the absence of sound theory firmly based on real conditions. He believes that the solution to the problem is not more action, but more and better theories on which effective action can be based. He further concludes that the "pseudogap" between policy formulation and policy implementation is mostly due to the fact that the former is not theoretically based in the true sense and the latter is haphazard and based on an unsystematic mixture of trial and error, tradition, and cultural custom. (Author/JM)

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POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

by

Ivan Luis Barrientos-Monzón

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ON THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY FORMULATION AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A MINIMAL INQUIRY INTO THE SCOPE AND LIKELY NATURE OF "PSEUDO" GAPS VERSUS "REAL" GAPS.

INTRODUCTION.

This paper will attempt to establish some minimal considerations for a possible distinction between valid and invalid policy formulation, as well as valid and in valid policy implementation in the field of educational administration. For this task it will be necessary to explore some distinctions in the concept of theory in general and the notion of "theory about practice", which will be posited as useful for the clarification of pseudo-gaps and "real" gaps between formulation and implementation.

If one follows a broad interpretation of the term "policy", as it relates to a rather qualified interpretation of the term "theory", which will be developed later, we may begin by positing that "policy" is a theoretical plan of action, i.e., a deductive and/or inductive operation which linguistically or symbolically (i.e., attitudinally) proposes and pursues a given sequence of ends in view, which in turn become the means for some sort of ultimate goal to be achieved. If so understood, "policy" may also mean a special type of "theory about practice" or about some performative course of events which should make a difference vis-à-vis an improved state of affairs. However, the problem, with a strictly a priori policy is that it may not work unless the deductive aspects of its formulation are based in turn upon an intelligent, tenable, and closeby estimated guess of certain conditions that are empirical in nature. This is the reason why certain theoreticians of policy would prefer that it should be based upon well collected empirical date, or at least upon a body of theory that should be actually derived from a set of existing empirical conditions, and that should be actually aimed at the attainment of a different set of improved (but also empirical) conditions. This does not mean that deductive knowledge should be viewed as negligible or unimpottant for the purposes of policy formulation (for indeed much of what passes for valid inductive formulation could fail on the formal side) but rather that the prevailing element for the kind of theory necessitated by sound policy formulation should be of a pragmatic nature. Therefore, sound logic is essential for policy formulation, but I think that the inductive element, based upon experience, should be viewed as crucial. In other

words, our first thesis should submit that deductive knowledge alone is a necessary though seldom a sufficient condition for valid policy formulation. The sequence proposed here is (i) the establishment of a set of formal assumptions, followed by (ii) an assessment of given empirical conditions, followed by (iii) a set of normative pronouncements, which in turn should modify the existing empirical conditions, and eventually be brought as closely as possible to the level of "oughtness", or of "ideal conditions", which is precisely the meaning that some people ascribe to the term "theory", as I hope to show later. However, and given the possibility that a subjectively perceived appraisal of certain existing conditions does not necessarily have to be equivocal, it is then also possible to use it as a basis for a normative section (or viceversa, to move from oughtness to a subjective appraisal of empirical conditions) and then, as a third step, to arrive at policy formulation, which is, I suspect, the way such a formulation is determined in many, if not most, administrative cases. Nevertheless, the difficulty, mentioned earlier is that it would take a particulary insightful thinker to successfully arrive at valid formulation, as is the case with some famous policies that have survived the test of time, but also that an asystematic series of flaws in the conceptual apparatus that undergirds this method of policy formulation (as is, I boldly suspect, the average case) may well result in an enqually asystematic series of misapprehensions that plague both the formulation as well as the implementation of policy. Since flawless deduction that culminates in the formulation of sound policy, based on a priori stipulations is an extremely difficult art, I maintain therefore that much of the so-called gap between policy formulation and policy implementation is due to the circunstance just described as it relates to the nature of theory.

On the Nature of Theory

Theory, in many circles, tends to be erroneously attributed to mere speculation or to consist in the development of normative propositions strictly based on a concept of "oughtness", i.e., on the manner things ought to be, rather than the manner in which things really are. Therefore, even if existing (or "real") conditions are mentioned in policy formulation, oftentimes such conditions are posited as a simple expression of subjective perception. There is nothing wrong with bias or subjective perception, viewed as the general perspective of an agent who does the thinking or theory-building, since it is inevitable to prevent a theory from being the expressive capacity of one or several subjects or individuals, and I prefer to use the term subjectness rather than subjectivity to describe this circunstance. 3

Subjectness then (rather than subjectivity) becomes a sine-qua-non condition for any theory building activity, but it is still possible to distinguish different ways in which it could be conceptualized. For example subjectness could be used in a Cartesian manner, where the empirical world is viewed as a mere extension of the thinking capacity, in which case policy formulation should follow the rationalistic dictum that the order and connection of ideas should be identical to the order and connection of things. Here policy is determined a priori, and the perceived (or extended) environmental conditions should be modified in order to fit a pre-established sequence, which in turn ought to follow strigtly cognitive stipulations. If performed "correctly", i.e., if carried out in a truly Cartesian fashion where the manipulation of external conditions should follow a most exacting formal model, in which the aspects of validity and logical consistency have been established flawlessly, such a deontological manner of policy formulation could really compete with empirically-induced procedures, providing that the factor of feasibility has been fully taken into account. In other words a policy what is deductively based on a concept of pragmatic possibility or feasibility, rather than based upon the "wishful-thinking" approach, i.e., policy formulation based on what is feasible rather than on the establishment of commendable and perhaps unreachable ideals, regardless of feasibility could compete, rather forcefully, with empirico-inductive approaches, especially if the latter are not carried out well. What is interesting here is simply to note that it would not be fair to compare flawless deduction with sloppy induction nor viceversa, and for that reason the only recourse left for a just comparison is to weigh soundly determined deduction with an equally sound process of induction. Nevertheless, given the nature of policy as defined earlier, it is interesting to also note that the a priori elements of the formal model which determines it, simply have to be applied to a plan of action, and viceversa, that the best methodology to induce reliable information from a given set of empirical conditions should be that one which is based upon sound logic. Here I am simply suggesting that good empirical procedures have to based upon sound formal models, and that an a priori formulation of policy, as a plan of action, will be most optimal (if not valid only) when structured around criteria of empirical apllication, At this point we should leave the dangers of pseudo-rationalistc policy formulation, since volitional projection alone could lead the way to hallucinatory paranoia, and we should begin to enter an alternative treatment of subjectness, which we way refer to as inter-active, and which could be posited as predominantly deductive or inductive, depending upon the case and the methodology used. The Kantian system of constructing categorical

imperatives, for example, if applied to policy formulation, would represent a respectable case of deductive thinking on the basis of logical and cognitive premises which are rather formidable in their persuasive weight. The Deweyan process of inter-active problem-solving, on the other hand, if applied to policy formulation, would represent a case of most persuasive induction on the basis of a continuous interplay between self and non self, organism and environment, theory vs. practice, individual and society, and or reason vs experience. Systems theory as an extension of both approaches if handled correctly, typifies an interesting combination of deontology and teleology, and is a self-corrective construct which utilizes the postulation of rules and the anticipation of consequences, where the successive phases of a process indicate types of categorical imperatives, and the feedback loops represent the self-corrective allowances given to the disposition of consequences as the process moves along.

Theory and Latin American "Gaps" vis. "Pseudo-Gaps"

Returning to theory, a common misaprehension in terms of the gap between policy formulation and policy implementation for example in Latin America, is the belief that in this area of the world there is too much theory and too litle practice. If is frequently argued that the typical Latin American problem is that there is too much talk and too litlle action, or that changes on paper never find their way into "reality", or that the real need is "practice" rather than "theory", because educational literature, for example, is too theorical whereas the actual practice of education leaves much to be desired. I beg to differ. In Latin America, I think, there is very little theory of the kind I have attempted to describe earlier in this paper, whereas the abundance of "wisheful thinking", "idealistic", and/or even romantic "theory" is overwhelming. I also think that this is true particularly in the area of administrative theory, and even general educational theory, where some, if not most, policy formulations are not necessarily based on a sound interpretation of empirical data, taken from "really real" conditions, but rather follow a prescriptive or normative pattern, which in most instances does not even qualify at a bona fide deductive formulations of the rationalistic or cognitive types described earlier. Ergo, Latin America needs "real theory", i.e., an assessment of the empirical conditions which typify her social, administrative, political and economical reality, as derived from relatively valid socio-scientific findings, and as opposed to historical traditions, custom, wishful thinking, and/or half-baked axiological pronouncements or vague generalizations. Policy formulations in particular, and educational literature in general, usually consist of a mixture of journalistic bureaucratic, legalistic, and high-sounding (albeit flowery) language, which finds its way into the printed, and mostly mimeographed, pages of a few articles, even fewer books, and myriads of reports, government documents, conference proceedings, and political speeches. My thesis is thus simple: the pseudo-gap

between policy formulation and policy implementation is mostly due to the fact that the former is not theoretically based in the true sense, whereas the latter is a haphazard, and hence unsystematic, "mish mash" of trial and error, bureaucratic tradition, cultural custom, and the indefinite continuation of a status quo that bears no relationship whatsoever with real theory of the type that should norm policy construction. This is not to imply that there is no "real" gap between policy formulation and policy implementation, always present under optimal conditions where implementation is an actual attempt to carry policy into practice, since the gap will always be there, but rather to suggest that much of what is viewed as a "gap" is not really such. There could be no real gap between formulation A and its alleged pragmatic application B, if B really does not follow A nor A precedes B, because both are a different kinds of animals that perhaps should be called C and D! In other words, even with the most stringently deductive approach, B should determine the formulation of A, at least insofar as A should, of necessity, lead to B, and hence require their dyadic reciprocity, particularly because both A and B should be sub-sets of a larger context which subordinates axiological oughtness not only to what is desirable but also to what is feasible. Therefore, if oughtness, feasibility, and the logical relationship between the two, are correctly maintained both policy formulation and implementation become a stipulative conclusion of what ought to be done because it should be possible to do it. Please note the hopelessness of the other situation; if A is not formulated precisely because its formulation is an expression of the feasibility of B, then the gap between A and B will vary in width on a direct ratio to the amount and kinds of invalidity present in the dyadic relationship. It has been suggested that in some extreme cases B cannot even preserve its identity as B, and should be called C because for B to be such, there are certain feasibility conditions to be met, and a sine quo non dyadic relationship that must logically bind the two. When bureaucratic practice and convenience are joined by a traditional or historical residue of prescriptive philosophies of education (oftentimes indiscriminately mixed, or mixed-up, with

no regard for logical consistency) plus some "foreign influences or fashions", plus a good dosage of local politics, a so-called "policy" is generated with such a tenuous basis, and such an unrelated sequel of trial and error continuation of the status quo, that there cannot even be a "gap" where there is an imense void. Shoud it be thought so, I do not think that the situation described above is any "strawman" or a hypostatic invention, because the limited attempts to assess the nature of educational "theory" and "practice", not only in Latin America, or the third world, but in many developed nations as well, seen to reveal rather clearly that practice is mostly traditional whereas theory (even when minimally present in the sense described earlier) seems unrelated to practice particulary if it is quite new or recent. Conditions of course vary, but the described situation seems sufficiently real, and does not appear to be an imaginary paradigm devised strictly for a reductio ad absurdum purpose even though it serves beautifully for the point I wish to make.

We see then that pseudo-policy formulations, based on sloppy "theory", wishful thinking, biased and shallow political expediency, core beliefs, and editorial innuendo, has practically no probability of success. Some needed inputs in Latin America (where the difference with other "more advanced" countries is not in kind but rather of degree) for sound administrative policy formulations should come from research in the social sciences (sociology, antropology) political science, economics, history, and organizational theory in particular. For the purposes of policy formulation, there is a need for specialized research, i.e., theory aimed at the elucidations of particular slices of reality, such as schools, government bureaucracies, cultural and subcultural regional differences, etc. Once this input is established, at least minimally, the dyadic relationship between policy formulation and its implementation, as suggested earlier, could be attempted.

The above treatment, neverthless, is only part of the issue, for it has merely dealt with the possibility and features of a pseudo-gap rather than a real gap. It becomes thus necessary to conceptualize such a real gap, as a function, again, of policy formulation. For this purpose I would like to play what I will

call an Aristotelian game that follows a Platonic question.

Plato's Question vs. an Aristotelian Game

The game really begins with Plato and his classical dialogue Memo: Can virtue be taught? For our purposes here we should ask, is policy formulation, based on sound knowledge of the type already described, a necessary and sufficient condition to guarantee successful policy implementation? Or is there no validity to the thesis that knowledge alone breeds virtue? This age old question, once more finds its application to the problem at hand, and makes us wonder if the link between theory about practice and practice itself, as prescribed, are duly warranted. And again I find myself returning to the equally old fight between rationalists and empiricists of the old schools, and the synthesizing efforts of Kantian or Neo-Kantian persuasion, or Deweyan pragmatism, or phenomenologically oriented efforts, and/or the Marxist and Neo-Marxist dialectical solutions, where I find that regardless of the synthesizing purpose, the balance will always appear tipped, however slightly, on the side of empiricism (as with pragmatic and Marxist thought or in positivistic views) or on the side of rationalism (as in phenomenology or certain breeds of logical analysis). The purpose of this paper, nevertheless, is not to delve on the metaphysical niceties of the issue, however fascinating, but rather on the practical implications of the question.

My conclusion, and I apologize for obviating the lengthy discussion that should lead to it, is that if knowledge of the kind required for sound policy formulation as defined in the first part of this paper, is characterized as an instance of "knowing how to do X" there is a qualified way in which policy formulation arrived at in the manner already suggested must, of necessity, guarantee successful implementation. In other words, knowledge that does not breed concomitant and consistent action is not really/knowledge.

Which Knowledge Breeds Virtue?

In her intersting paper " On the Reduction of Knowing That Knowing How", Jane Roland Martin uses the analytical breakthrough provided by Gilbert Ryle's The Concept of Mind, and Hartland-Swann's reduction of "knowing that" cases to "knowing how" instances, to suggest a classification of "know" dispositions. For Martin, once we go through the Hartland Swann reduction, it is possible to talk about a "knowing how" category which includes two distincts types of capacities. One type implies that the capacity has been acquired through the exercise of practice, and the other does not. Martin calls the capacities that necessitate of the concept of practice Type A capacities, while capacities that do not require practice are referred to as Type B. Then she argues that capacities of Type A are skills or competences, where actual observation is needed to ascertain the presence of the skill or competence, whereas Type B capacities(which relate only to the ability to state certain facts or answer certain questions correctly, i. e., knowing in the sense of knowing factual propositions) do not require practice. It is important to note here that Martin differentiates between "capacities" and "tendencies" in the sense that the latter must reveal a steady level of performance whereas the former are indicative only of an inclination or ability to act in a certain fashion. Now since there are capacities that need not to be learned through practice (i. e. like Type B) and yet imply dispositions such as "knowing how an accident happened" and"knowing how the motor works", which do not quite meet the full requirements of Type B and yet are not clear instances of Type A, we are confronted with types of knowledge that presumably could be elicited upon demand or request but nevertheless appear less informative than Type B capacities. Martin concludes that theses dispositions clearly belong in the "knowing how" category, but are distinct from Types A and B, and proposes to call them Type C dispositions. In other words there is a third type of capacity, still subsumed under "knowing how", but not quite as complete as Type B abilities, nor as related the practice criterion as Type A dispositions. This enriched distinction enables Martin to proceed on to sentences which refer to knowing value judgements or rules of conduct. She believes that, linguistically speaking, sentences which refer to knowing rules of conduct are "knowing that" types of propositions (e.g. as in "knowing that one must be efficient", etc.) and yet that there seems to be a difference between these types of "knowing that" propositions and those "knowing that" instances that refer to knowing factual propositions. In the case, for example, of someone who knows that Columbus discovered America,we have a different instance from the one exemplified in the case of someone who knows the he shoud

be efficient. Indeed,Martin argues, the evidence of someone's knowledge that he should be efficient must be presented at the level of action or conduct, and obviously this is not a simple case of "knowing that". The conclusion that pertains to policy is, I think, both in terms of the Meno question and the ensuing Aristotelian game, that the knowledge necessary for the formulation of rules of conduct, at least in one of its important senses (cf. Martin) typifies a tendency that cannot be subsumed under the regular"knowing how " category, as set up by Ryle and modified by Hartland-Swann and Martin (who adds the subdivision detailed above). This is because the knowing how category contains capacities and not tendencies, which indicates the need for another category of knowing, strictly aimed at the treatment of tendencies. Martin indicates that she has no name for this new category, but that it is clear that its recognition indicates the presence of two completely distinct "knowing how" types of categories - one of capacities and one of tendencies, depending upon the case. Indeed, of someone knowing that he should be efficient there is a prima facie case of "knowing that", as a tendency, but it may well end up, upon examination, as a "knowing how" statement of tendency. In terms of policy formulation vs. policy implementation, I conclude that the type of knowledge needed must be aimed at the presence or absence of tendencies, through practice, rather than the mere establishment of capacities. It is intersting to note, however, that the determination of capacities is also of great utility for policy formulation, since we have formerly referred to the question of feasibility, and we have seen how it is possible to move from cases of factual and performative knowledge at the limited level of capacity to the more desirable level of tendency. Since it is logical to expect that permanence and consistency of performance are crucial goals for policy formulation, it would seem that the Martin distinction points at a feasible way of identifying the kinds of knowledge that breed virtue if we raise the Meno question in terms of a gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. What we would want is to move from an identification of capacity to a verification of tendency, and the more we approach such a metamorphosis the narrower is the gap.

With regard to pragmatic thought, to simply argue that efficient causes become part of final causes, as a result of the elimination of metaphysical dualisms which typifies this type of theory, should solve the problem, for indeed "pure knowledge" or knowledge for its own sake have no room in this philosophy. In fact, any knowledge or any idea should be a plan of action, to qualify as such, and therefore any theory becomes the formulation of a policy of sorts.

Playing the Aristotelian Game

We are ready now for the Aristotelian game, and in it the famous four causes will be related to school-administration theory in the following manner:

I - The Material Cause: is the main element to work with, i. e., school and/or learning environments, which in turn imply government officials, teachers, students, parents, administrators, and community members. Here education in general is viewed as a paideia rather than only schooling.

II - The Formal Cause: will be constitued by the body of literature proper (theory, research, etc.) that constitutes a linguistically constructed policy formulation as a a "shop manual", so to speak, formally stated.

III - The Efficient Cause: will be the element of leadership commited to formal policy formulation (II) as generated by an awareness of both material and final causes (I and IV)through the exercise of authority (legitimized expertise) and power (the ability to move people and goods through the balanced combination of freedom and control and advice and consent). And last by no means least we have:

IV - The Final Cause: which will visualize the general end of sound administration, i.e., of a decision-making process, and a system of control that is optimally effective and provides good education (as defined in II) for all. The "oughtness" as related to ultimate goals, objectives, and aims, could be placed at this level.

If we now try to relate the Aristotelian game to the Meno question, it would seem that "policy formulation" and "policy implementation", as interactive practice, would consist of establishing how to move into a final cause (IV) from beginning points which could be taken at the material and formal levels (I and II) through the concept of efficency (III) and with a full realization of the importance of III. It is indeed crucial to pay attention to III, and few policies actually study its importance,as I hope to show in the following section.

Some Kinds of Policy as they Play the Game

The wishful thinking approach first poses some sort of final cause (however vague), then looks at the material component (I) though only minimally in most cases, and then proceeds to conclude the cycle at the formal level (II) in equally vague terms. The gap in this case cannot possibly be anticipated as anything narrow, and must, by an almost natural implication, end up as something extremely wide.

A frequent alternative is the stipulation of the formal element, in the best cases grounded on finality (IV) although not necessarily in all instances, or the positing of finality (IV) as formality (II) with the results of an extremely wide gap again.

A fourth alternative, also rather common, is the establishment of formality as finality (a merely verbal exercise) without even attempting to deal with possible differences in the movement toward finality (IV) through efficiency (III) by acting on materiality (I) ... all viewed as formality (II). Again the gap cannot be but wide, with all of the implications noted in our previous treatment of "knowing what" and "knowing how", from Ryle to Martin, through Hartland-Swann.

Another possibility is to look at the formality (II) as inclusive of materiality (I) moving through efficiency (III) so that finality can be achieved, or, if finality (IV) is conclusively established as a categorical imperative for materiality (I), and formality (II) is viewed as a hypothetical imperative whose fruition will depend on the pragmatic capabilities of the efficient cause (III) or efficient causes, the latter become the heart of policy formulation, since they will constitute the linguistic expression of the link between policy formulation and policy implementation.

When the possibility of implementation becomes the most important element in the formulative tasks, I think one arrives at the kind of knowledge that is optimal for linking the two elements in a very specific type of interactive order, although a gap is still likely, but this time for the right reasons. I therefore submit that a policy that is formulated with efficiency as a sine qua non condition for its very formulation, and in this sense as the raison d'ētre for the whole task to be undertaken, in the best kind of policy, and perhaps the most honest one, thus honoring the old saying about honesty and policy. This does not mean that finality or formality per se are not important, but rather that, by definition --and also by essential quiddity-- policy as theory about practice is not merely an a priori normative statement on final causes, is not a merely descriptive or explanatory statement of factual circumstances. In effect, it is neither a document of intrinsic importance nor one of extrinsic exclusivity, but rather one which qualifies as "real" policy because of its rootedness on prāxis as the vehicle that will link materiality and finality in the efficiency

sense only, or else its real and true identity would be lost.

A Proposed Sequence for Game-Playing

In conclusion, policy as a statement of finality is not really policy, as defined. It is rather a prescriptive essay at best, if well carried-out in the deductive sense, and it is mere wishful thinking at worst. Policy as sole formality (unrelated to the other three elements) is bureacratic in the nature and therefore is in great danger of losing its pragmatic and essential meaning. Policy as sole materiality would be incomplete as such too: it becomes a merely factual report of allegedly factual reality. This possibility is so absurd that its directional sense would be practically nil, for policy must be both a normative and strategic statement on how to achieve finality, either teleologically or deontologically, in a manner that will act upon materiality (or the factual component) as an effective, and desirable, change agent. In this sense, then, policy is policy if and only if it is linked with efficiency, for without the latter anything that may (or may not) be submitted as policy is not really policy in the sense ascribed to the concept by this paper. So, efficiency is a sine qua non condition for a type of policy formulation where the likely gap with policy implementation might be attributed to an expected variability in the empirical component only, and therefore to inductive or misrepresentations errors that are material only, and not exclusively formal in nature.

And further, in view of the above discussion, it would seem that at least one of the best kinds of sequences for real policy-formulation should consist of:

First. The development of a knowledge of the material component that is a function of a knowledge of finality, which in turn must be normed by the concept of efficiency, leading to the formal stipulation (or form-ulation) of the desired order or sequence of implementation.

Second: The knowledge of finality referred to above, i.e., the knowledge of what is possible with the material conditions, which are posited as a point of departure for the reason (already alluded to) that the fourth component may be unrealistic if merely decided a priori, or as wishful thinking. This does not mean that finality should not be predicated on elements of oughtness, but rather that the stages of finality, as determined by materiality, and not viceversa, must be practically oriented. One could, of course, posit finality as the epitome of Platonic reality, and this would be nice but rather dangerous for the reasons shown, and because of the

shortcomings of academic idealism. Its desirability, as such, seems to be more applicable to the purpose of highly theoretical, universal aims, rather than regional needs. One alternative here would be to posit finality as a normative ideal, followed by an adjusted statement of efficiency(III) as an end in view in the Deweyan sense. In this case a recognition is made of the dictum "the Platonic cave is all we've got", and an assumption is made (rather safely, I think) that no geographical region in the world has succeeded in matching whatness with oughtness. A Kantian type of categorical imperative, especially in the light of its teleological side (i.e., the anticipation of consequences before willing the act) might be an alternative to consider and expand. In conclusion, vis-ā-vis the Meno question, a knowledge of finality, in the qualified sense explained above, ought to breed "virtue" and cope with the real spirit of the question in spite of its inherent conceptual and implementational difficulties.

Third. The development of appropriate knowledge of efficiency, i.e., to know which pragmatic avenues are open in order to achieve finality with the givens posited by materiality(I) should also affect the establisment of finality(IV) if viewed as a viable goal in the light of the factual circumstances revealed by the material factor(I).

Fourth. The design of formality(II) strictly in terms of efficiency(III), i.e., as a type of knowledge to be derived strictly as a function of a finality(IV) that is viewed, again, as a viable goal for (I). Here, the linguistic expression of policy formulation should transcend nearly all of the limitations of "wishful thinking", normative deontology, and/or bureaucratic shallowness, all of which have been treated in this paper as rather illegitimate statements of policy formulation.

Closing Observations: "THE GAME ENDS WITH "REAL GAPS"

Given the premises established by the above discussion, it should be fairly safe to conclude that the gap between policy formulation and policy implementation should tend to be wide if the spirit of the preceding sequence is altered, and especially as per the priorities given to the role of materiality, formality, efficiency and finality in "real policy" formulation. At this point it should also be rather clear that the purpose of the Aristotelian game that was used as a paradigm to confront the double issue of sequence vs. co-implication in policy formulation was simply to clarify the role and importance of each phase in the process of determining the kinds of knowledge that would be necessary in order to distinguish pseudo-gaps from "real gaps" in the question of theory about practice and practice itself. It is hoped that such a paradigm, however incomplete and with no pretension to be exhaustive in terms of the rich alternatives present in

the consideration of the problem, has been presented in a manner that is at least minimally clear. I would like to turn now to a specific consideration of what I take to be the Latin American situation, in which I find that firstly and foremostly the use of finality as the main source of policy formulation tends to be extremely ambitious. It is indeed here that I find the widest gap between formulation and implementation. Latin American policy formulation as the linguistic expression of formality alone(II) is obviously defective as a functional tool. Here again the gap would tend to be rather wide. It has been pointed out before that this manner of formulating policy is rather common all over the world, and Latin America is certainly no exception to this circumstance. Even when granting that the difference between the Latin America formulations of administrative policy that are based upon an exaggerated presence of linguistic formality tends to be degree referenced rather than a difference in kind, many if not most policy formulation documents to be found in this area of the world are excessively verbalistic, and the lack of reference to elements I, IV, and especially III, of our Aristotelian paradigm, is notoriously blatant.

In the isolated instances where Latin American policy formulation is posited as a function of efficiency alone (quite a rarity indeed) a tendency to develop a trial and error approach is the greatest danger, and hence the need for socio-scientific bases(I) and hypothetical or categorical imperatives (IV) is rather urgent. At any rate, and even in the best, though uncommon, cases, this approach does not seem to be systematic enough. This minimizes the gap, but still renders it wider than the suggested sequence. All in all, efficiency in isolation is condemned to fail because of its lack of rootedness in genuine theory, of the type priorly described as necessary for sound policy formulation.

Even though the absurdity of positing merely factual description as the maximal component of policy formulation has been pointed out before, I feel that this is a minimal danger for Latin America. At any rate I do not think that this approach should be encouraged too much, since we have indicated that policy formulation should be prescriptive by definition, and if left at the factually descriptive level only, this route would be as useless as finality alone, even though it would be more rooted in reality. This input is necessary and very meaningful as the foundation of the proposed sequence, but should be rather ineffective if taken alone as an expression of policy. Even in the United States of North America, an area so rich, and perhaps one of the richest in the world in terms of the availability

of empirical studies of socio-economic import, as it relates to educational situations, policy formulation is seldom based on factual statements alone, and much less used as prescriptive proposal for action. I still think, however, that this possibility poses no threatening danger for Latin America as a general area, even when allowing for the influence that empirically-oriented degree programs have on Latin American professionals educated abroad and given the nature of regional politics, and of the other instruments of implementation, this consideration is almost a moot question. Even if viable in certain areas, this alternative would create less of a gap than formality or finality alone, although I am uncertain as to which of these three alternatives is the best, or rather the least defective one. At any rate any one of the three would still be more inneffective than the proposed sequence.

Finally, if we turn to the recommended sequence, a gap is still to be expected, although much less futile and pronounced than any one of the other alternatives considered. This is, I think, due to the customary and obvious theory-practice problems, such as the inevitable presence of an element of unpredictability, and/or insufficiency in the designed scopes, unexpected developments or variables, erroneous pre-assessments, a view of the future as an extension of the present, and the simple impossibility of anticipating all of the consequences of a proposed course of action, if teleologically rather than deontologically oriented. Again, I think that this inevitable problem arises from the fact that policy formulation, at best, is a kind of a hypothetical rather than a categorical imperative. Now if policy is arrived at by means of strictly deontological means (which might be possible in situations where materiality(I) is assumed to be quite accurate, and indicative of a phenomenal reality whose depiction has been arrived at rather soundly) a deductive formulation of policy as a categorical series of imperatives might still be viable, although the anticipation of consequences that might be conducive to a universal law or principle, in my view, is still enough of a problem.

Nevertheless, here the gap (never to be ruled out) would be attributable to the application of the rules rather than their formulation, and some systems, such as the socialistic forms of policy formulation, seem to follow this pattern, since the major rules are seldom changed as ends in view, but rather as the means to carry such normative rules into fruition or practice. Actually, regardless of political system, we may generalize and mutatis mutandis say that any system which allows for policy formulation, and its interactic

with policy implementation, in the manner suggested by this paper, should expect an inevitable gap, but that there is a difference between a pseudo-gap(as discussed earlier) and a "real" or legitimate one.

This paper has dealt with some minimal considerations that should allow an incipient distinction between pseudo-policies and pseudo-gaps, rather than with an experimental treatment of real gaps. In effect, the whole effort of this essay has been devoted to an aseptic intention: that of "cleaning up" some of the muddled thinking that appears to plague the distinction between theory and practice in educational administration, and its conceptual sequels, plus the application of this thinking, to the issue of a possible gap between policy formulation and policy implementation.

Therefore the treatment of a real gap between policy formulation, and policy implementation should presuppose a "clean" point of departure. The present effort has been devoted to the elucidation of such a point of departure rather than to the assumption that all instances of a gap between policy formulation and implementation are ready for analysis in the qualified sense that has been referred to, because I am persuaded that they are not, with few exceptions. The empirical study of "real" gaps, on the other hand, is a different sort of enterprise, and its treatment, upon tentative exploration, appears to be so hopelessly political that I am grateful for the circumstance that I do not have to pursue it this point. Regional differences alone, plus tha lack of a sufficient body of socio-scientific research that should enable meaningful generalizations, would make this sort of study a gigantic task.

In the meantime I hope that the present effort has succeeded in at least presenting some conceptual possibilities that deserve serious consideration.